

ART



Calls to put WWI trench model on full display

Space sought for award-winning diorama

Lynn Duke

A scale model of First World War trenches commissioned by Crieff Remembers has won an international award.

And now its creator Neil Thomson is seeking somewhere that the 8ft x 6ft diorama can be once again put on display.

The Crieff illustrator and design consultant was commissioned to make the model as part of the Strath capital's centenary commemorations of the First World War and the Battle of Passchendaele in 2017.

It was very well received and was a star attraction during the Crieff Remembers exhibition at Strathearn Artspace.

At the weekend it went on show at the Scottish National Scale Model Show in Perth, where Neil was delighted to be awarded the IPMS (UK) Trophy for Best Model of a British Subject.

It has also been used for school workshops and exhibited at the Black Watch Museum in Perth as part of an evening lecture on the Battle of Passchendaele presented by military historian Professor Gary Sheffield. But

now Neil is trying to find a good home for the model where it can be on display to a wide audience and hopefully also be used as an educational tool.

He said: "We are always looking for new ways in which to exhibit the model for educational purposes and to remember the sacrifice made by the World War One generation. Despite contacting a great many museums I have had few responses.

"It has great educational potential and it seems a shame to have it tucked away in an attic out of sight, especially in this centenary year of the end of the Great War."

Titled 'Assault on Eagle Trench', the detailed diorama depicts a company assault by the Rifle Brigade that took place in September, 1917, in an area north east of the destroyed village of Langermarck, to capture a strongly defended area of German trenches situated on high ground and known on British Maps as the Eagle trench system.

Between July 31 and November 10, 1917, British and Commonwealth troops attacked in an area to the east of the Belgian town of Ypres bordered on three sides by the German front lines.

Commonly known as the Ypres Salient, this became the scene of terrible fighting

where exceptionally wet weather and heavy shelling created extremely muddy conditions which hindered the Allied advance.

The compact nature of the battlefield made all combatants continually under the range of artillery fire, which destroyed the natural drainage system and reduced the area to muddy bog.

Consequently, advances were made in yards and fresh troops were worn out or destroyed within a matter of days.

While focusing on a particular area of the battlefield, the diorama is intended to provide a composite picture of the fighting that took place over the whole area of the salient, illustrating the difficulties troops faced in trying to advance in such conditions and the nature of the German defences they faced.

The model is made up of eight, two-foot-square tiles. Each tile tells its own story with an accompanying script describing the action including resupply, evacuation of the wounded, artillery/tank support and platoon assaults.

If anyone has any ideas or advice that could take the display of 'Assault on Eagle Trench' to a wider audience, contact Neil Thomson at info@ntdesign.co.uk or 07967 910388.

Revamp bill for Crieff Town Hall

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electrical cabling to be laid, the inside of the building was painted and new carpets were fitted.

Keen history enthusiast Mr Hamilton, who stressed he submitted the request acting in a personal capacity, said one of the reasons he asked for the information was after being told by contacts in the construction sector the final total could be a lower figure.

He also expressed concerns as part of his enquiry related to water ingress; the building's basement - which houses artefacts known as the Crieff Monuments - and the access arrangements with Crieff Succeeds Business Improvement District (BID), which took over the tenancy of the building after VisitScotland pulled out.

With regards to safeguarding the basement from water damage, PKC's FOI response went on to state what was described as 'tanking work' was not included in the previous project and "... was to be done under a separate project and is noted under this financial year's planned projects."

Mr Hamilton said he felt this meant a substantial amount of additional public money would need to be spent on the building below ground level, and called on Culture Perth and Kinross - the custodians of the monuments - to realise the significance of the items, particularly as the BID team is already well into its initial five-year plan.

He said: "There doesn't seem to be an understanding of how significant these monuments are.

"My worry is [after the BID's initial five years are complete] they will be left there with the door locked."

A spokesperson from Culture Perth and Kinross said: "Culture Perth and Kinross has no comment to make on any speculation around the future of the town hall.

"We are continuing to work with the Crieff community, with Crieff BID and with Perth and Kinross Council to ensure that there is, and continues to be, public access to the objects in question."



Top model Ffion and Neil Thomson and David and Fergus Campbell with the cup for Best Model of a British Subject for Neil's detailed diorama



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